CLAIMS

1. A method for obtaining presence information by a first user through a first network, the method comprising the steps of:

transmitting by the first user a subscribe message for presence information of a second user to a presence proxy;

transmitting by the presence proxy the subscribe message to a presence agent, the presence agent related to the second user; and

transmitting by the presence agent the presence information to the presence proxy.

2. The method for obtaining presence information as claimed in claim 1, wherein there is further included the step of transmitting by the presence proxy the presence information to the first user.

3. The method for obtaining presence information as claimed in claim 1, wherein there is further included the steps of:

storing by the presence proxy the presence information; and

transmitting the stored presence information to the first user at a later time.

4. The method for obtaining presence information as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting by a first user a subscribe message for presence information of a second user includes the step of transmitting by the first user the subscribe message for presence information of a plurality of second users, at least one of said plurality of second users being located in a second network.

5. The method for obtaining presence information as claimed in claim 4, wherein the step of transmitting by the presence proxy the presence information to the first user further includes the step of transmitting by the presence proxy a plurality of response messages to the first user, each of the plurality of response messages including presence information of one of the plurality of second users.

6. A method for obtaining presence information by a first user through a first network, the method comprising the steps of:

transmitting by the first user a subscribe message for presence information of a plurality of second users to a presence proxy;

transmitting by the presence proxy a plurality of subscribe messages to a plurality of presence agents, each of the plurality of presence agents corresponding to one of the plurality of second users; and

transmitting by the presence proxy a single response message including the presence information of each of the plurality of second users.

7. The method for obtaining presence information as claimed in claim 6, wherein there is further included the step of transmitting by each of the plurality of presence agents the presence information corresponding to at least one of the plurality of second users to the presence proxy.

8. The method for obtaining presence information as claimed in claim 6, wherein there is further included a step of storing by the presence proxy the presence information of each of the plurality of second users.

9. The method for obtaining presence information as claimed in claim 8, wherein the step of transmitting a single response message includes the steps of:

forming said single response message including the presence information of each of said plurality of second users; and

transmitting the formed single response message to the first user.

10. The method for obtaining presence information as claimed in claim 6, wherein there is further included a step of receiving by the presence proxy at least one response message including presence information from a presence agent located in a second network.

11. A method for obtaining presence information by a first user through a first network, the method comprising the steps of:

transmitting by the first user a subscribe message including an identity of a list of a plurality of second users about which presence information is sought to a presence proxy;

transmitting by the presence proxy a plurality of subscribe messages to presence agents, each of the plurality of subscribe messages corresponding to one of the plurality of second users on the list; and

transmitting by the presence proxy the presence information to the first user.

12. The method for obtaining presence information as claimed in claim 11 wherein there is further included the step of transmitting by the presence agents presence information concerning each of the plurality of second users to the presence proxy.

13. The method for obtaining presence information as claimed in claim 12 wherein there is further included the steps of:

combining by the presence proxy the presence information from the presence agents to produce a combined response message; and

transmitting the combined response message to the first user.

14. The method for obtaining presence information as claimed in claim 11, wherein the step of transmitting by the first user an identity of a list includes the step of indicating by the first user the identity of one of a plurality of lists of second users for which to obtain presence information.

15. The method for obtaining presence information as claimed in claim 11, wherein the step of transmitting a plurality of subscribe messages includes the step of transmitting at least one subscribe message to a second user in a second network.

16. A method for obtaining presence information by a first user through a first network, the method comprising the steps of:

transmitting by a presence agent a notify message to a presence proxy, the notify message including presence information of a second user;

transmitting the notify message by the presence proxy to the first user; and

storing the presence information of the second user by the presence proxy, if the presence proxy fails to receive an acknowledgment message from the first user.

17. The method for obtaining presence information as claimed in claim 16 wherein there is further included a step of regaining access by the first user to the presence proxy through the first network.

18. The method for obtaining presence information as claimed in claim 17 wherein there is further included the step of transmitting a subscribe message by the first user, the subscribe message including a request for presence information of a third user.

19. The method for obtaining presence information as claimed in claim 18 wherein there is further included the steps of:

responsive to the step of transmitting a subscribe message for presence information of the third user, transmitting by the presence proxy a subscribe message for presence information of the third user to a presence agent; and

transmitting by the presence agent a response message to the presence proxy, the response message including the presence information of he third user.

20. The method for obtaining presence information as claimed in claim 19 wherein there is further included the step of transmitting by the presence proxy to the first user the presence information of the third user and the presence information of the second user.